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SafetyWorks! Newsletter for a Safer Workplace, Spring/Summer 2005

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Labor Standards

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SafetyWorks!

Quarterly news for a safer workplace

What Are Your Employees Inhaling?

Tara Dijak, 21d Consultation Program Occupational Health Specialist

SILICA IS NOT JUST DUST! Silica (also known as Quartz, Silicon Dioxide or Crystalline Silica) is present in most materials mined from the earth, such as rock, sand and clay. Many common work activities expose employees to harmful levels of microscopic silica dust. You are exposed if you do masonry work, construction work, road sweeping, drilling, blasting, grinding or clean-up operations. Some drywall joint compounds, grouts and buffing compounds contain silica too! It has serious health effects.

Silica is now listed as a human carcinogen. It is associated with lung cancer and with an increased risk of contracting tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases. Silica may contribute to bronchitis, emphysema, stomach cancer, heart, kidney and liver disease, and rheumatoid arthritis, according to reports by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Research indicates that current OSHA permissible exposure limit (PEL) for crystalline silica may not protect workers from disease. OSHA is trying to update the PEL, but that could take years. In the meantime, it is important to protect people who work with this highly toxic material.



Photo: Silica dust created while surface grinding on cement.

Breathing silica causes silicosis—an often-fatal hardening of the lungs, due to scar tissue formed around the inhaled silica particles.

Here's what to do:

1. **DO NOT** use materials containing more than 0.1% crystalline silica.
2. Use wet cutting. Do not dry sweep or blow with compressed air.
3. Use local exhaust ventilation, enclosures, and high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtering vacuums for cleaning.
4. Avoid smoking, eating or drinking in dusty environments.
5. Provide showers, washrooms and changing rooms to keep dust from contaminating workers' vehicles and homes.
6. Use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators and disposable coveralls.
7. Develop a management plan that includes periodic air monitoring, employee training, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), medical examinations and warning signs in areas of high dust.

For information, employee training, or air monitoring for silica, contact SafetyWorks! at 1-877-SAFE-345 or visit our web site at www.safetyworksmaine.com. Additional information on OSHA's web site at www.osha.gov or NIOSH's web site at www.cdc.gov/niosh.

SafetyWorks! Helps You Reduce OSHA Penalties

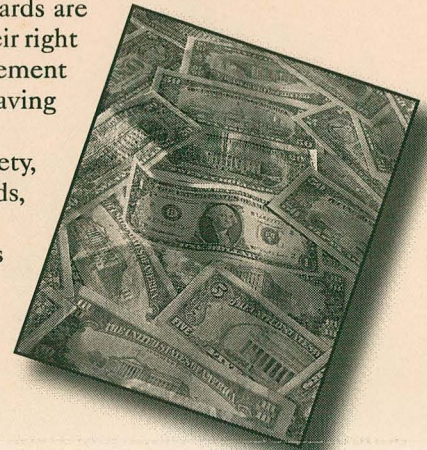
Margaret MacLeod, 21d Consultation Program Occupational Safety Engineer

OSHA visits an employer at a job site or facility. Violation(s) to the OSHA standards are found and penalties may be issued. If offered by OSHA, the employer can waive their right to an informal conference by entering into the Expedited Informal Settlement Agreement (EISA). By accepting EISA, a company agrees to a 50% reduction of the penalty by having a 21d onsite consultation or training, by calling SafetyWorks!.

Big problem areas concerning training are in fall protection, scaffold, ladder safety, and hand and portable power tools. Construction should be most aware of fall hazards, electrical, struck by, caught between (excavation), and work zone safety.

SafetyWorks! is reaching employers that have not been contacted in the past. This process has proven to be effective because employers and employees are learning the OSHA requirements and are starting to implement safe operations in the planning of their facility and job site operations. OSHA wants employers to be aware there is a free outreach and education program. Awareness promotes complying with the regulations and keeps everyone safe.

Contact **SafetyWorks!** at 1-877-SAFE-345 for an onsite consultation.



Driving Maine Safely (formerly Maine NETS)

Michele Grant, Occupational Health Specialist

Announcing the Release of its Occupant Protection Program for Employers

In approximately 60% of motor vehicle fatalities, the occupant was not wearing a safety belt. Because traffic crashes are the leading cause of death in the workplace, Driving Maine Safely developed an Occupant Protection Program for Employers. This free program offers step-by-step guidance on safety belt surveys, program implementation, monthly outreach and training, and program evaluation. The Maine National Guard has seen employee seatbelt use increase from 47% to 97% since implementation of an earlier program. Great Job!

FREE CLASSES

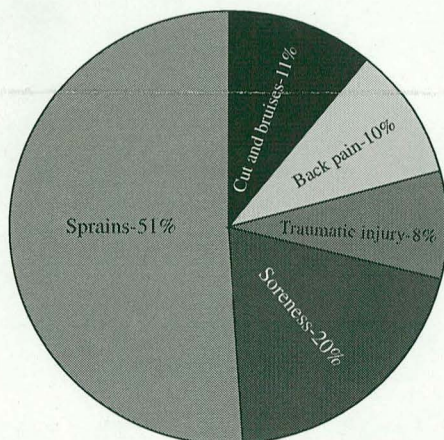
The SafetyWorks! course schedule for fall classes will be posted in August on our web site:

www.safetyworksmaine.com

Spaces fill quickly,
so register early.

For on-site training or consultations, see our web site or call toll-free at 1-877-SAFE-345.

Percentage and the Nature of Injury Reported



Differing Industries Have Frequent Injuries in Common

Theodore E. Bradstreet, Planning & Research Associate II

The three industries reporting the highest numbers of Workers' Compensation disabling injuries during 2002-2003, in descending order, were elementary and secondary schools, grocery stores, and general medical and surgical hospitals.

Despite the differences among these industries, the most frequently reported was "sprain, strain, or tear." The second most reported injury category for all these industries was "soreness, pain, or hurt, except to the back." Less often reported, but still significant to all three industries, was "back pain or hurt back."

For all three industries, the back was the body part most often injured, followed by "multiple body parts."

The most common causes of injuries were overexertion, especially in lifting, and falls to floors or to other walking surfaces. For more detailed information, go to: www.maine.gov/labor/bls/charwork.htm

Visit our web site at www.safetyworksmaine.com

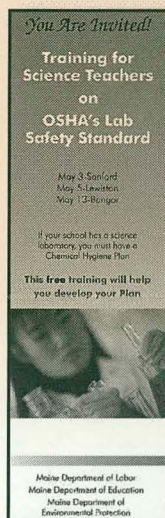
STATE * COUNTY * MUNICIPAL

School Superintendents and Science Teachers...

Did You Miss The Opportunity?

On May 3, 5, and 13, The Maine Department of Labor, with the Maine Department of Education and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, held training sessions for Science Teachers on OSHA's Lab Safety Standard.

Help us, to help you keep your school labs safe. Make sure you have a Chemical Hygiene Plan and someone onsite as your Chemical Hygiene Officer. If you were unable to attend and want to request a copy of the course material or have any questions, call 1-877-SAFE-345.



FOR ALL EMPLOYERS: 23 Locations... Your Local CareerCenter Is A Great Resource!

Employers: Discover all the ways Maine CareerCenters can work for you.

Advertise your job openings to thousands of active job seekers statewide at no cost to you! With years of proven experience in providing assistance to Maine employers, we can do the work to find the resources to make your business succeed. Whether it's accessing monies to train your current employees, or finding qualified employees for your business, we look forward to assisting you.

To find out more, call 1-888-457-8883 or visit our web site at www.mainecareercenter.com.

CareerCenter

The Maine Employment Resource

Information in the articles is not a substitute for official policy or regulations. The editor is Dawn McKenney, Workplace Safety & Health Division. Tel: 207-624-6498, TTY: 1-800-794-1110 (for people who are deaf and hard of hearing), e-mail: webmaster.bls@maine.gov. The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity in employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

ATTENTION: Fire Chiefs

Title 26, M.R.S.A., Chapter 28, "*Safety Standards for Interior Structural Firefighters*" regulation changes passed during last year's Legislation session, will be effective on **July 1, 2005.**

If you have not received a copy of the regulation changes or have any questions, please contact the Workplace Safety & Health Division at 207-624-6400.

For current compliance directives, go to our web site and select "Regulations", then "Bureau of Labor Standards."

Meet your Board of Occupational Safety & Health

Are you one of Maine's Town Managers, Chiefs, or Superintendents wondering who the Board of Occupational Safety & Health is? The mystery is over. In this issue, we're introducing you to your Board of Occupational Safety & Health (pictured).

The Board of Occupational Safety & Health has ten positions at full membership. The members consist of the Director of Labor Standards, one insurance carrier, one state employer & employee, one municipal employer & employee, one county employer & employee (employee position vacant), and two general public positions (one vacant).

The Board was created to ensure that the employers and employees working for the community, schools, and state government have a safe and healthy work place.



From the center, left around table: Chairperson, Ric Beyler (Insurance), James Downie (State Employee), Timothy Allen (Municipal Employee), Philip Meldrum (Interim Public), Gary McGrane, (County Employee), William McPeck, (State Employer), Rhonda Scribner (Public), Roy Woods (Municipal Employer), Dawn McKenney, (Clerk of the Board), William Peabody (Bureau Director), and Gwendolyn Thomas (Legal Counsel).

Visit our web site at www.safetyworksmaine.com



*Quarterly news for
a safer workplace*

Spring/Summer 2005

FROM THE DIVISION DIRECTOR

April showers bring May flowers, so the saying goes. This also means the start of the spring/summer construction and travel seasons.

Road crews are working diligently to make our roadways better and safer. Potholes (or major craters as the case may be) are being repaired and filled-in. Cleaning crews are out sweeping up the sandy remains from a snowy winter. Be sure to do your part to keep road crews safe by driving slowly through work zones.

If you or your employees work outside, remember

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to drink plenty of water or other beverages without caffeine. Summer sun is hot and the potential for dehydration and the risk of sunstroke increase as the temperature rises. To decrease the chances of severe sunburn, everyone should wear sunscreen no matter if you are outside for work or pleasure.

On behalf of the staff from the Department of Labor, have a safe, healthy, and fun-filled spring and summer season.

David Wacker, Director
Workplace Safety and Health Division